

REMARKS

Summary of substantive patentability issue

Amended independent Claim 1 recites deterioration indicator means whose deterioration-resisting power is less than or equal to the deterioration-resisting power of a recoverable and reusable unit. In contrast, the Matsushita patent's humidity sensor is not understood to comprise such means. Accordingly, amended Claim 1 is understood to be allowable over this patent, and the other independent claims, reciting the same or similar features, are understood to be allowable for the same or similar reasons.

Status of the claims

Claims 1, 3, 4, 7-13, and 19-29 are pending. Claims 2, 5, 6, 14, 15, and 17 have been canceled without prejudice, and Claims 16 and 18 were previously canceled without prejudice. Claims 1, 3, 4, 7-11, 13, and 19-23 were amended solely to improve their form and correct minor informalities therein, and Claims 1, 7, 10, 13, 19, 20, 22, and 23 were also amended to overcome a substantive rejection. Claims 24-29 were added. Claims 1, 7, 10, 11, 13, 19-25, and 27 are independent.

Requested action

Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw the outstanding rejection in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks.

Allowable subject matter

Applicant gratefully acknowledges the allowance of Claims 5, 6, 11, 12, and 21 and the indication that Claims 15 and 17 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowed if redrafted in independent form.

In response, Applicant has redrafted allowable Claim 15 in independent form as new independent Claim 24 and canceled Claim 15. In addition, Applicant has redrafted allowable Claim 17 as new independent Claims 25 and 27 and dependent Claim 26 and canceled Claim 17. Therefore, Applicant respectfully requests that Claims 24-27 now be allowed.

Further, Applicant has amended allowed independent Claim 11 to delete the last paragraph thereof and to make this deleted last paragraph the subject of new dependent Claim 28, which depends from Claim 11. Applicant submits that amended Claim 11 remains allowable because the humidity sensor in the Matsushita patent is not understood to comprise an optical filter having a light transmitting property which varies according to an environmental history with respect to temperature and/or humidity, as recited by amended Claim 11. In addition, Applicant submits that dependent Claim 28 is also allowable because it depends on allowable Claim 11 and because it includes all the features of Claim 11 as allowed in the July 13, 2004 Office Action.

Moreover, Applicant has amended allowed independent Claim 21 to delete the last paragraph thereof and to make this deleted last paragraph the subject of new dependent Claim 29, which depends from Claim 21. Applicant submits that amended Claim 21 remains allowable because the humidity sensor in the Matsushita patent is not understood to comprise an optical filter having a light transmitting property which varies according to an environmental history with respect to temperature and/or humidity, as recited by amended Claim 21. In addition,

Applicant submits that dependent Claim 29 is also allowable because it depends on allowable Claim 21 and because it includes all the features of Claim 21 as allowed in the July 13, 2004 Office Action.

Rejection

Claims 1-4, 7-10, 13, 14, 19, 20, 22, and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by the patent to Matsushita,

Response to rejection

In response, while not conceding the propriety of the rejection, independent Claims 1, 7, 10, 13, 19, 20, 22, and 23 have been amended. Applicant submits that as amended, these independent claims are allowable for the following reasons.

Claim 1 relates to an apparatus comprising a recoverable and reusable unit performing a function independent of determining the degree of deterioration of the recoverable and reusable unit, which is recoverable and reusable after use of the unit and the apparatus in an environment, depending on the degree of deterioration of the unit due to the environment in which the apparatus is used.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite deterioration indicator means for indicating the degree of deterioration of the recoverable and reusable unit due to the environment in which the apparatus is used before the unit is reconditioned for reuse. Claim 1 has also been amended to recite that the deterioration indicator means is disposed inside the apparatus.

Claim 1 has been further amended to recite that the deterioration-resisting power of the deterioration indicator means that deteriorates over time due to the environment in which the

apparatus is used is less than or equal to the deterioration-resisting power of the recoverable and reusable unit. Also, Claim 1 has been amended to recite that the deterioration indicator means is arranged so as not to participate in any functions of the apparatus during use of the apparatus, and that the deterioration indicator means determines the degree of deterioration of the recoverable and reusable unit before the unit is reconditioned for reuse by permitting a determination of the degree of deterioration thereof.

In contrast, the patent to Matsushita is merely understood to disclose a humidity sensor for a piece of electronic equipment, such as a VCR, a video camera, or an air conditioner, whose condition continues to change, depending on the changing moisture content of its environment. As a result, this patent is not understood to disclose or suggest deterioration indicator means whose deterioration-resisting power is less than or equal to the deterioration-resisting power of a recoverable and reusable unit, as recited by amended Claim 1. For this reason, amended Claim 1 is understood to be allowable over the Matsushita patent. And since independent Claims 7, 10, 13, 19, 20, 22, and 23 have been amended to recite the same or similar features, they are allowable for the same reason or similar reasons.

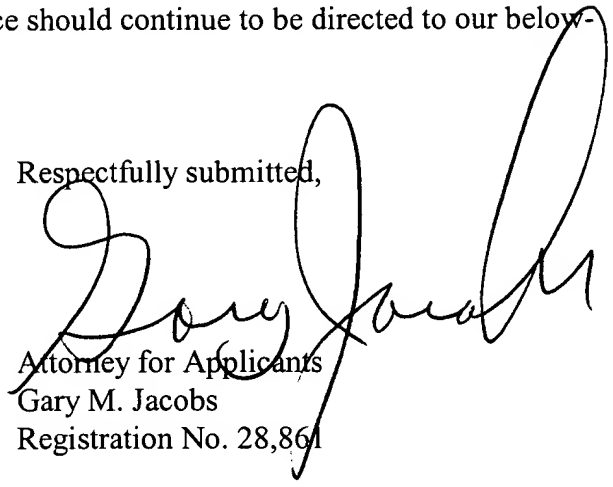
The dependent claims are allowable for the reasons given for the independent claims and because they recite features that are patentable in their own right. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is respectfully solicited.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, the claims are now in allowable form. Therefore, early passage to issue is respectfully solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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